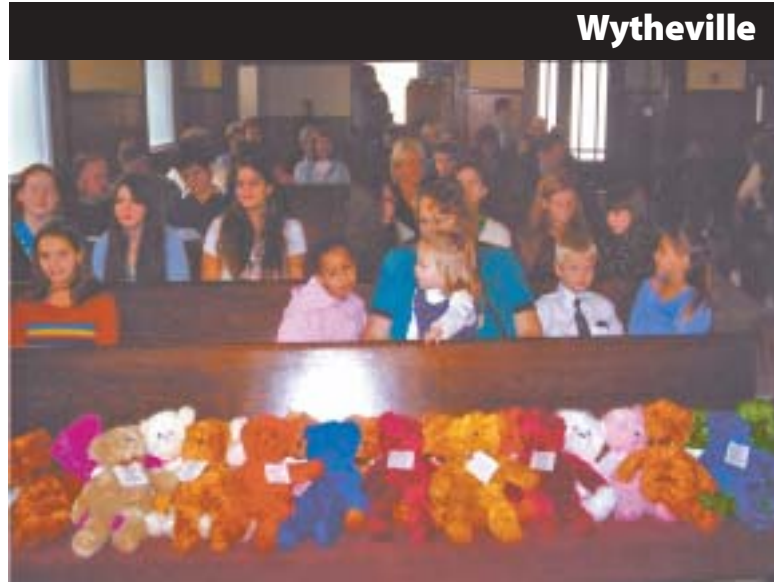




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At Mt. Zion UMC of the Elk Creek Circuit, teddy bears sit in the front pew, until they're chosen by a parishioner to take to a shut-in or person in need.

District Roundup

NEWS FROM YOUR DISTRICT

Abingdon: In February, the combined youth groups of Wharf Hill and Sugar Grove UMC planned a Valentine spaghetti dinner to raise money for St. Jude Children's Research Hospital in Memphis. "What was not anticipated was the 10 inches of snow that began earlier in the day and continued throughout the next day," says the Rev. Mike Ward. The youth decided to go on with the dinner, delivering take-outs to the community. With the help of adult volunteers, the youth raised \$838. All of the supplies and food were donated by church members.

Big Stone Gap: After the April 16 Virginia Tech shooting, members at Rye Cove UMC felt called to respond. They made ribbons in Hokie colors and asked the Rye Cove schools to observe Orange and Maroon Day on April 19. The ribbons were distributed to students and teachers, and "the schools were overflowing with Virginia Tech colors," reports Brenda Dishner. Prior to a moment of silence at the high school, a Rye Cove UMC youth member, Brady Palmer, read Matthew 5:4 over the loud speaker.

Chattanooga: Forty-five years ago, Jim Bowen started the first Boy Scout troop at New Salem UMC. He's been leading Troop 29 ever since. In February on Scout Sunday, Bowen was honored with a special award for 50 years of scouting, which includes five years as a Boy Scout himself. Bowen's award and many years of service were featured on the local NBC station, says Pastor Paul Longmire.

Cleveland: On a Saturday in April, Spring Creek UMC held a one-day Vacation Bible School, featuring scripture-laced lessons in basketball, golf, fishing, and basketball. Ten adult volunteers and 25 children attended, including 10 who were non-church members. In addition, \$500 was raised for Nothing But Nets, to help prevent malaria in Africa. "I guess some of them gave pretty good," said the Rev. Kenneth Bailey, referring to the generous mission offering.

Johnson City: On Easter

Sunday, Munsey Memorial welcomed 1,462 worshippers during four services. Munsey also received a special offering of more than \$57,000 to build a house for a family that came to the church through InterFaith Hospitality Network. An additional \$77,000 was contributed to the general budget, reports Senior Pastor Brian Taylor.

Kingsport: Send news and photos to: Editor, *The Call*, P.O. Box 32939, Knoxville, TN 37930-2939, fax (865) 690-3162, thecall@holston.org.

Knoxville: On May 20, children at Church Street UMC raised more than \$4,000 for Nothing But Nets with a myriad of activities including soccer, basketball, jumping jacks, hula hoops, and pogo sticks. Attending the event was Dane Bradshaw, former University of Tennessee basketball player. The money will purchase more than 400 mosquito nets for malaria-threatened villages in Africa.



Bybee UMC's five generations of church members includes great-great-great grandmother Clara Streetman, holding Baby Kobylee.

Maryville: Green Meadow UMC's School of Hope was the beneficiary of two fund-raisers within one week. The first was a musical festival, yard sale, and barbecue that raised \$2,200 for the education mission to teen parents. The second fund-raiser was an impromptu concert by artists Sanctus Real, Needtobreathe, and This Beautiful Republic, raising an additional \$500.

Morristown: Bybee UMC is now home to five generations of one family – from great-great-great grandmother Clara Streetman on down to baby Kobylee Turner McIntire. Koby-lee was recently baptized by Pastor Charles Davis.



Comprised of 5th graders, the Greeter/Guide Squad at Beaver Ridge UMC makes guests feel welcome.

their destinations. Four groups rotate in their duties, serving one Sunday each month. The young people "take their jobs seriously," says Absher.

Tazewell: After attending Resurrection in January, youth at Ebenezer UMC in Bluefield were inspired to head up their church's monthly mission offering. On the first Sunday in February, the youth gave a presentation about Heifer International. By the end of the month, they had raised \$788 to purchase animals for needy families around the world. Most of the congregation donated money for the youth to choose the animals (including a water buffalo, goat, sheep, ducks, geese, chickens, and honey bees), but Allie McMillion received a donation to purchase a llama in honor of her birthday. For more on Heifer International, visit www.heifer.org.

Wytheville: Last fall, a member of Mt. Zion UMC in Comers Rock received a "get well bear" from her sister. The act of kindness inspired a new ministry at Mt. Zion, in which parishioners donate bears, then "tag" them with this message: *This bear has been among the congregation of Mt. Zion UMC. It has heard the Word read and taught, prayers prayed, and songs of praise sung. Now it comes to you with prayers for your comfort, strength, and healing. May the Lord bless you and keep you in his care.* Each Sunday, the bears sit on the front pew, until they're chosen by a parishioner and delivered to someone in need of tender loving care. Almost 200 furry friends have been delivered by this congregation of 35, reports Pastor Bill Shupe.